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Dr. Noah Elliott, African American Pioneer Physician

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Dr. Noah Elliott – African American Pioneer

Physician

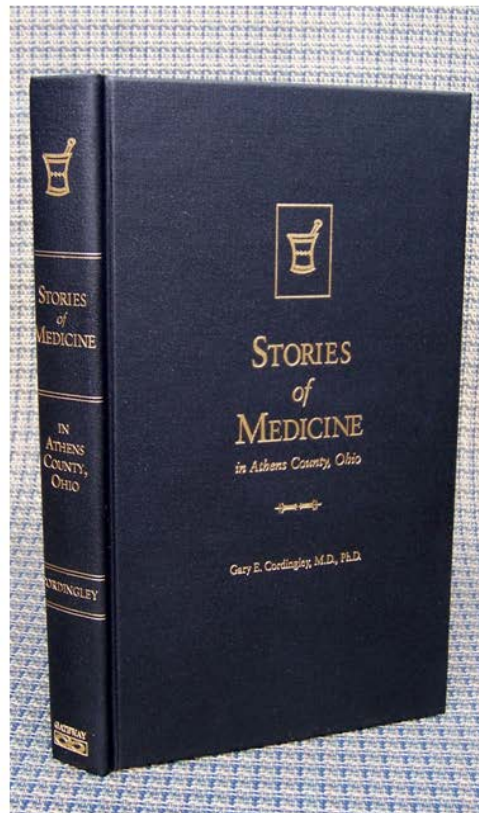
Patriot

Veteran

Pastor (?)

Married into famous family

From Stories of Medicine in Athens County, Ohio – by Gary Cordingley, M.D.



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Tripping lightly on the sands of time . . .

- Census records
- Veterans pension records
- Obituary from newspaper
- Obituary from JAMA
- A few secondary sources

What we don't have . . .

- Diaries
- Letters (except from his wife)
- Medical records kept on patients
- City directory listing (except one in Columbus, 1890-91)
- Contemporary newspaper stories (except obit)
- Any previous historical article with more than a brief mention

Oldest available record

1860 U. S. Census records -- in Gallipolis:

Name: Noah Elliott

Age: 31

Sex: Male

Color: Black

Occupation: Physician

Value of Personal Estate: \$100

State of Birth: Kentucky

Other Census Records

- 1870 – Gallipolis (Real Estate: \$900)
- 1880 – Albany
- 1890 – Columbus (Veterans' Census)
- 1900 – Columbus
- 1910 – Columbus

In each census his occupation is listed as “physician.”

Military Service

- Enlisted – 24 Dec 1863 in Co. E, 26th Regiment of the U.S. Colored Infantry, Riker's Island, New York Harbor.
- Private, promoted 30 June 1864 to NCO status as Hospital Steward (Acting Hospital Steward as of 29 Feb 1864.)
- Discharged – 28 Aug 1865, Hilton Head, S.C. (Mustered out with unit)

Service Summary – 26th USCI

26th UC Infantry (3-years)

Organized: Riker's Island, New York Harbor on 2/27/64
Mustered Out: 8/28/65

Officers Killed or Mortally Wounded: 2
Officers Died of Disease, Accidents, etc.: 3
Enlisted Men Killed or Mortally Wounded: 28
Enlisted Men Died of Disease, Accidents, etc.: 112
(Source: Fox, Regimental Losses)

From	To	Brigade	Division	Corps	Army	Comment
Apr '64	Oct '64			Dist of Beaufort	Department of the South	
Oct '64	Feb '65	2nd Separate			Department of the South	
Feb '65	Feb '65	1st Separate			Department of the South	
Feb '65	Jun '65	2nd Separate			Department of the South	

Battle Casualty Summary

26th USCI

26th UC Infantry

Organized: Riker's Island, New York Harbor on 2/27/64

Mustered Out: 8/28/65

4 Rows Found

#	Date	Place	<u>Killed</u>	<u>Wounded</u>	<u>POW</u>	<u>Missing</u>
1		John's Island, SC	0	<u>1</u>	0	0
2	07/07/64		0	<u>1</u>	0	0
3	12/04/64	Gregory's Farm, SC	0	<u>1</u>	0	0
4	12/09/64	Gregory's Farm, SC	0	<u>1</u>	0	0

Military Pension Record

Contains following affidavit 16 April 1889:

“Since my discharge from said service on the 28th day of August 1865, I have resided in Lee Athens Co. Ohio from 1865 to 1866, from 1866 to 1874 Gallipolis Ohio, from 1874 to 1884 Lee Athens Co. Ohio, from 1884 to the present time Athens Ohio and that my occupation has been that of physician.”

Note: Lee refers to Lee Township of Athens County, site of the village of Albany.

Why did he live in Albany?



The lintel and the cornerstone are all that's left of the Enterprise Academy (1863-1886), which is considered to be the first educational institution in the U.S. owned by blacks for the education of blacks.



What's a Hospital Steward?

"The steward of a hospital cannot exactly define what his duties are, the difficulty being to find out what they are not."

-- A Civil War Nurse

Duties of a Hospital Steward

Administrative

- Oversee administration of field hospital
- Supervision and discipline of attendants
- Purchasing hospital supplies
- Keeping hospital records
- Supervision of food services
- Maintenance of hospital dispensary

Duties of a Hospital Steward

Clinical

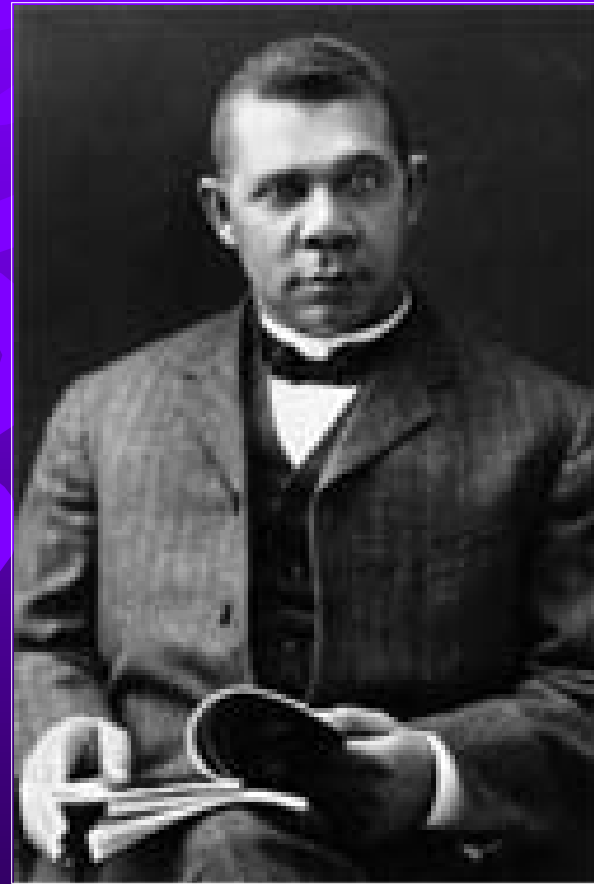
- Preparation and administration of prescribed medications
- Applying dressings and bandages
- Apply cups and leeches
- Extract teeth
- Administer enemas
- Administer injections to urethra

Medical Training

- Probably learned via apprentice system, no record of medical school has been found.
- Hospital steward experience probably enhanced his medical repertoire

Famous Brother-in-Law

- Dr. Elliott's wife, Mary (nee Davidson) was the sister of Olivia Davidson, who became Booker T. Washington's second wife in Athens on 11 Aug 1886 at the Elliott home.



Reproduction of Wedding Invitation from BTW Papers

The Announcement of the Wedding
of BTW and Olivia A. Davidson

[Athens, Ohio, Aug. 11, 1886]

Marriage Ceremony

at

Residence of Bride's sister,

Mrs Dr Noah Elliott¹

Athens, Ohio,

Wednesday afternoon, Aug. eleventh

at four o'clock.

Booker T. Washington Olivia A. Davidson.

1886.

Noah & Mary Elliott's House

193 W. Washington St.



Historical Marker

Dedicated 18 October 2008

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

In this house, on 11 August 1886, famed African-American educator Booker T. Washington married Olivia A. Davidson. Residents at the time were Mary Davidson Elliott (sister of Olivia) and her husband Dr. Noah Elliott, a veteran of the 26th United States Colored Infantry in the War of the Rebellion (1861-65). Olivia was a student circa 1870 at the Enterprise Academy in Albany (10 miles west). She was also an alumna of Hampton Normal A & I in Virginia, where she first met Mr. Washington when he gave the commencement address at her graduation, and Framingham State Normal School in Massachusetts. In 1881, after graduation from Framingham, she moved to Tuskegee, Alabama. There she plunged into the work of building Tuskegee Institute, of which she was a co-founder.

Historical Marker (Back)

AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

From the late 1800s to the mid 1900s many African Americans lived on or near this section of Washington Street. Just to the east on Pratt Street was the Athens African Methodist Episcopal Church. The building still stands and is now a residence. A local African-American notable, who lived nearby at 159 W. Washington St., was Andrew Jackson Davison, an attorney with an active practice in Athens for a number of years. His wife Eliza Brown Davison (often misspelled Davidson) was a cook for Gen. George A. Custer during the War of the Rebellion (1861-65) and for a time afterwards. A. J. and Eliza are both buried a block north in the West State Street Cemetery.

Letter from Mary Elliott to Booker T. Washington

From Mary A. Elliott

Athens [Ohio] March 16th 1890

Dear Brother We are all as well as usual, I myself have had rather poor health this winter but am feeling a great deal better for the past month. I hope this may find you and the children well, and doing well. I hear from your School quite often through the little papers and am glad to hear of the great progress being made in every thing pertaining to the school. I expect as soon as I can in the future to give something to Olivis Memorial Scholarship Fund. Booker my reason for writing to you to day is, that I wish to say to you that we are going to make a change. I hope for the better, But am not sure. I am going to move to Columbus and go into the same business ondy add dressmaking to it. Have rented my house out here have to pay high rent in Columbus, But not so much as I would in the main part of City. I am going out

Letter Continued

on West Broad St 468. I should think a bout one half mile east of Mother's¹ house toward the Capitol, am going to start tomorrow if nothing prevents. Dock² can get some buisness there to do which will help me a good deal, and I will be close to Hiram³ and Mother and if you and the children can ever come we can all see them. Kelly⁴ took it very hard a bout Olivia's death. Emma⁵ she is married again married a man by the name of Newton, getting a long better then usal I think Mother feels proud to think that you dont for get her and write to her some times. She wants to see the children. Tell my little girl Portia, that Aunt Mary has not forgotten her, and, when I get fixed up a little shall write to her soon. Give Uncle John and Aunt Susie, and little cousins my love and kiss the children for me, and write when you can and dont feel toward me as if you were a stranger, but feel and talk to me as if I were your Sister I feel as if you were my own brother. I am a poor writer and dont write as often as I should, have done, but look over it as I have a good deal to weerry my mind in my buisness but am going to have a wman help me. You are haveing good success with your school work and am in hopes will be in couraged to still go forward.

M. A. Elliott

Obituary

Columbus Evening Dispatch, 27 Feb 1918, p. 7

NEARLY 92 YEARS OLD.

Dr. Noah Elliott, Colored Physician
in Columbus for 30 years, Dies
of Age's Infirmities

Highlights:

- Practiced until six weeks before his death
- Wife survives
- Services West Side Spiritualist Church
- Body to be cremated in Cincinnati